Ripley Dec 7. 1832.-

My Dear Sister Maria

Half an hour since I received your letter dated the 29th Nov.- & trembled almost when I recognized your hand writing I felt that you had some reason to complain of my negligence. & expected I should have a letter full of the bitterings of a dear sisters wounded heart complaining of my negligence, & remembering it my forgetfulness.- But dear Sister it was not so. You wrote as tho you had heard a small voice whispering & beloved sister- if your brother loves you & never will forget.- It is so, my dear, it is - Maria is a precious treasure now on earth. & should death remove her, the Lord can take her home, her brother would feel that he had another treasure laid up in heaven.-

Sister I have for weeks gone by, passed sentence of condemnation upon my self for not writing you.- I have resolved again & again to take my pen - but pastoral duties have occasioned the delay - But a letter of apologies would be as unwelcome & deny you as little good as a letter of complaints would have done me.- You wish me to write particulars about my self, my feelings, my all - This is impossible - If any pen could paint my feelings which often agitate my soul, mine can not. Some times they are almost insupportable & this standing alone.- friend- cannon, earthly all taken away from me.= Once I thought the wound would heal - I felt so when in the company of my dear brother & sisters - But while Ripley is my home the wound will bleed.- I have found that duty requires me to banish as much as possible from my mind my loneliness.- In order to effect it, I implored what the Lord would have me do, & relying upon his strength strive to do it.- You have doubtless heard that the goodness of the Lord attended me on my journey to Governeur with my little son - I tore my self away from him - & left him you know in what kind hands.- Mark & My Son, My Son, often escapes from my lips - It seems that I must have him with me. But the Lord will direct - I received a letter a short time since commencing thus, My Dear Pa,- I can not say in the usual phrase of young letter writers, I take my pen in hand, because like Bonaparte & Milton & some other great men I employ an amanuensis - But still you may rely on it the composition & sentiments are as much my own, as the President's veto message was his.- Since you left I have enjoyed my self in this manner very well considering my friends here had but a very imperfect knowledge of my language - but that difficulty is now removed & I am able to converse with them very intelligibly. & I doubt no doubt it is would do your heart good to hear me & Ma Smith hold one of our long talks,-

I have not had to call a Physician but once since you left & then rather on the account of the anxiety of my friends than from any great matter of disease – my flesh grows firmer, & I often hear my friends remark that I grow plumper & fairer every week – My appetite is always good – it is to my mental progress if I am believe the flattering things I daily hear said of me, it is all a fond father could wish. I learn to know the countenances & voices of those around me – I reach out my little hands to express my willingness to go from one to another – I open my mouth to receive Kisses – & hold my bottle with both hands when I eat – & push it away when it does not come right. I pull the hair & noses of my friends, & laugh in their faces at their silly talk. I continue to keep as much as one person from idleness & mischief all day long. – I suffered my self to be weighed in town, the result was 17 lb. This morning I heard my Pa Smith say that he did not think I had eaten as much in the whole as 15 minutes in 5 days past" – I can not copy the whole letter, as he was very particular in his narration – He closes thus in this manner. "But not to enlarge (as ministers say when they can't think of any thing else) I will inform you that our friends here are all well give my best respects to all enquiring friends – I remain dear Pa your little Son John T. Preston Jr. – I need not tell you my dear sister that I enjoy much in reflecting upon my little Son – I have given him to the Lord, & could I be assured, that when you have talked for joice my heart. – Yes to day I would say yes – So his life & yours is spared he shall be taught respecting the Creator – & soon know that prayers for their benefit & offer up his infant prayers for your and my self better than any time since the death of my dear little Mary – I have had with me my beloved Sister Charlotte most of the day. It seems almost as tho my dear friend had come back. – Her health is much improved. She enjoys much better health than when I last saw her in Hebron. – She will stay with me till the 19 or 20 then if the going will permit she will go on east to Salem – We have spent some time in visiting among my people. They are very much attached to C, ~~so much~~ so well they may be. I never knew her worth, her excellence, her faculty of pleasing & rendering others happy, as I now do. – My people would rejoice to have her remain & occupy the place that her beloved sister has left vacant. But I would not be accessary to this to deprive my brother of the affections of one (could I do it) who is so well calculated to increase his usefulness & promote his happiness. – I shall rejoice when I can be assured that she is my sister in another sense – known what she now is. – I hope the day is not far dis-

tant

I was pleased to find that Br Smith & Mary were pleased with Mr Johnson & Ella & Julia &c. you & Sellar in perhaps had some fears – The both knew they ought to love him & will love him as a son & brother, – But it is frequently the case if we are disappointed in little things that we are eyes & refuse to look at excellencies, – But our friends were much more liberal than ourselves, they could not see in him those little flaws which you once pointed out & made me half believe they existed, If he had had one white eye & black ear. I dont believe Brother Smith & Mary would have seen them. – They looked as we always should do for things most important first. These they found standing out prominent. – read of all men – You will find him I dare not a kind companion. – If not by nature, you will by grace, & what grace does is better than natures work – I have thought much of you since my last visit with you. I have parted with you probably for the last time – Sometimes it causes a pang of heart – I know your privations must necessarily be many – you will no doubt have fresh & earnest, – but you will leave ten thousand objects behind you for ever, round which the cords of affection are fastened. I know it must require a mighty struggle to break these cords – Friends & home may bind. – But my grace shall be sufficient for thee" The Lord will provide. – When I call to mind the relation you sustain to God, the Saviour of sinners, & the Son loves & must – & say by the side of it his precious promises I fear no evil on your account. He will take care of you not a hair will fall from your head without your Heavenly Fathers notice. – I might tell you many things that are necessary in order to be prepared for your in portant station But you would say of them all I know it & feel it, & am striving to obtain them – I cannot tell my dear sister our best teacher when with singleness of heart we desire to know how we may best glorify him & build up his cause – I trust I have found it so, & you also. – I rejoice that you are this winter with Br C. Stein to do him good, to calm his troubled mind. Pray much together, you will delight to remember, when separated on earth never to meet again, those precious seasons that you spent together at the throne of grace. – I should rejoice to change places with him one quarter, – & be with you – But now I leave you up, – I did it with a smile, dear sister I shall ever remember that last fond look that thrilling pressure of the hand – they are stamped upon my heart. – As long as they are there my prayer shall be for your usefulness in the cause of our Saviour, for the salvation of souls, – I want you to write as often as you can – I will answer if the Lord permit. – if not you will be reconciled – Ask C if he has spoke for me my college note, if so tell him write me, & if not write me, —

My dear sister I must close for I must write Julia

ROGERSVILLE [illegible] CO. [illegible]

Miss Maria H Preston
Royalton. Windsor Co
Vt.

Dec 18 1842